

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CORPORATE AND PARTNERSHIPS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6th March 2023

WORKFORCE UPDATE

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Support)

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report represents the final County Council's workforce update, with key workforce data, areas of progress in year, and a closing down of the County Council's workforce agenda and data.

2.0 A Smaller More Diverse Workforce

- 2.1 The County Council's workforce (non-schools) has fallen slightly at a headcount of 7,255 and FTE of 5,627, with unfilled vacancies now seen across a range of services. The non-schools FTE has reduced since 2011 by over 10% with numbers directly employed in schools reducing by 47% FTE. However, this relates to schools converting to academies when numbers are removed from NYCC records and so does not represent an actual reduction in the overall education workforce.

3.0 Key Workforce Data

- 3.1 **Composition:** the non-schools' workforce continues to see a slight increase in the proportion of men, with a split of 23.5% male and 76.5% female. The proportion from an ethnic minority background increased slightly at 2.9% (against a local population figure of 3.3%). The proportion of staff declaring a disability decreased slightly to 3.8% from 4%. However, 24.2% of staff chose not to declare their ethnicity, and 50.8% have not identified if they have a disability, which is partly due to an issue with reporting data, so these figures are known to be underreported. The average age of the workforce increased slightly to 47.5 years and the proportion of under 25-year-olds has reduced to 4.58%, from 4.85% last year. 43% of staff are full time, so 57% work part time, with around 6% of these having multiple part time roles.
- 3.2 **Sickness Absence:** sickness absence (measured in number of FTE days lost) was 8.72 days in 2021/22, an increase on the previous year, but still lower than 11.5 mean FTE for all English single tier and county councils and 10.0 mean FTE for all English authorities (2021-2022). In the first 3 quarters of 2022/23 this has continued to increase with a projected outturn figure of around 9.1 days. This still remains low in comparison with other similar benchmark councils which are looking to outturn at 10.4 -12.2 days.
- 3.3 In 2022/23 working days lost to long term sickness absence accounted for 53% of all absence, with the most common causes of sickness absence remaining as stress, depression and anxiety related (28%), musculo-skeletal problems (11.8%) and infections (12.6%). The impact of Covid is still ongoing, making up 6.5% of absences in 2022/23, and Covid infection can also be recorded under other absence reasons including chest and respiratory due to the effects of long Covid.

- 3.4 Sickness absence was particularly low at the start of the pandemic, when large parts of the workforce moved to homeworking, and normal sickness absence was reduced due to self isolation requirements or employees being furloughed. NYCC has, along with other employers, seen a rise in sickness absence subsequently. The reasons for this are varied. Postponed operations result in sickness absence prior to surgery and during post-operative recovery. The extended demands of the pandemic, and staff shortages in the last 18 months, will have had an impact on pressures for the remaining employees and consequent illness and absence levels. Covid infections have continued to have an impact, and there has also been a rise in infections other than Covid which have spiked due to less communal transmission of viruses during the pandemic.
- 3.3 **Employee Health and Wellbeing:** NYCC aims to provide a health-promoting and inclusive workplace so staff can feel and perform at their best. Staff are encouraged to use the wellbeing resources and support those around them in doing so.
- 3.4 The initiatives this year include those below, which have also been made available to district council staff wherever possible:
- AskSAL, our Staff Advice line, offering an additional line of support by providing practical advice and support which is run by professional HR staff.
 - The Employee Assistance Programme provided by Health Assured includes access to 24/7 counselling services for staff (and any member of their household). Call volumes from April to September 2023 totalled 1,872, higher than the previous 6 month period and representing 7.5% of total headcount. There is also a range of online diagnostic tools, self-help guides and plans on lifestyle issues such as mental health, healthy eating and exercise. Health Assured is available via an app as well as a website.
 - Employee support groups have been established for staff, focussing on a range of health and wellbeing topics including menopause, working parents and autism. These groups are available to all staff, and during the past 12 months staff in Districts and Boroughs have been able to access these.
 - There are Yammer communities and/or MS Teams groups established for all support groups, and an email contact list is maintained of anyone who wants to be kept informed on the topic. There are currently 443 employees on the contact list, with 326 people in Yammer communities and 80 people in MS Teams groups.
 - The [‘Taking Care of YOU Toolkit’](#) is a useful tool to help prevent and/or manage stress. It raises awareness and understanding of mental health and includes straightforward strategies and coping mechanisms to help manage the challenges of work and the workplace, and the impact of these on mental health.
 - The Looking After You intranet site provides a wealth of resources on a range of health and wellbeing topics.
 - Bereavement resources include practical advice and guidance for those dealing with bereavement personally or supporting others through loss.
 - Learning Zone packages are available on personal resilience and mental health.
 - Regular communications on healthy workplace issues and national health and awareness raising campaigns, using the intranet, key messages, blogs, team brief, Yammer, newsletters and the Healthy Workplace Group. Highlighting less well talked about topics and provision of related resources (e.g. domestic abuse charter, menopause guidance and training).
 - Regular reminders about resources available to staff
 - Promotion of access to free external provision – Humber and North Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership wellbeing sessions, psychological first aid training, resilience hub, Humber Recovery College and Humber and North Yorkshire Cancer Alliance.

- Voice Your Views staff survey incorporating results on wellbeing.
- Health Needs Assessment planned as a pulse survey in 2023.
- Information and support on Zoom fatigue including a webinar and top tips.
- Guidance for supporting staff who have had Covid and long covid, to be reviewed this year to reflect any updated national guidance.
- Guidance for managers on supporting staff affected by domestic abuse with a Learning Zone package to be developed and available this year.
- Guidance for managers and a separate one for employees on the menopause, which have also been converted into online training packages.

3.4 **Turnover:**

Turnover was 15.9% in 2021/22, matching the mean level for all English authorities, 15.8% in 2021-2022. Turnover has decreased slightly in 2022/23 with a predicted outturn of 14.9%. The job market locally and nationally has experienced significant pressures due to a range of factors, including the impact of BREXIT and market shortages for some roles caused by the pandemic and the aftermath. These and other factors, including changes in employees' working expectations and priorities have created a more difficult job market. The cost-of-living crisis added to an already difficult recruitment and retention picture with significant pay inflation for entry level roles across retail, hospitality and facilities (cleaning and catering). NYCC is particularly vulnerable to this pay inflation with higher levels of directly employed cleaners, care staff and teaching assistants than other authorities where these services have been outsourced or where there are less LA schools. However, NYCC's length of service remains a healthy average 13 years against a local authority average of 7 years, and the Council continues to be relatively successful in recruiting and retaining staff in a very difficult recruitment environment.

3.5 **Spend on agency pay:** The workforce approach is to employ staff on permanent contracts and supplement this with internal relief staff (usually staff with an existing part time contract at/in a different location/role) or use existing staff in the same team to work extra hours. Agency staff are used only in circumstances when all other options have been exhausted, however increasingly scarce labours markets has resulted in the increased use of agency solutions. Spend on agency staff was £716,389 in 2020/21, £2,315,069 in 21/22 and so far is £4,282,458 in the first 3 quarters of 2022/23 with the outturn expected to be some £5m.

3.6 Whilst this is a significant increase, agency spend remains low compared to other local authorities; For instance: other regional council spend: Rotherham £7.47m, York £9.5m, Leeds £10m, Bradford £17m. The largest increases in agency use are due to increasing demand for care workers, social workers and occupational therapists in Health and Adult Services, and for educational psychologists, social workers and children's residential care workers in Children's Services due to both recruitment challenges and increased activity.

3.7 IR35 off-payroll charges for individual services, introduced for the public sector by HMRC in 2017, account for a portion of total agency spend. For 21/22, the total IR35 was £557,377 and is currently at £1,285,282 in the first 3 quarters of 22/23. NYCC minimise the use of interim and consultants covered by IR35, and the vast majority of off-payroll (IR35) engagements are for specialist and independent mental health and best interest assessors (94%) and Educational Psychologists required due to statute/regulation.

4.0 **Recruitment Developments**

4.1 Young People's Employment Initiatives

In North Yorkshire the percentage of young people aged 16–24 claiming out of work benefits as of November 2021 was 3.5% (4.9% nationally), compared to 3.7% in the same

period 12 months prior, and 3% in November 2019 (pre-pandemic). This is attributed to the return to a buoyant employment market combined with the Kickstart Scheme. NYCC wants to equip young people for life and work in a strong North Yorkshire economy and provides employability opportunities for young people which is also an opportunity to develop a pipeline of future talent for the workforce, addressing workplace and labour market demographics and recruitment difficulties.

- 4.2 A range of employment initiatives have been developed in NYCC over many years including: Supported Internships, Work Experience, Apprenticeships, Graduate Scheme, Graduate Internships, Traineeships, and most recently the Kickstart Scheme, as detailed below.
- 4.3 Kickstart Scheme (Jan 2021 – March 2022 start dates, up to Sept 2022 completion)
This Government funded programme was launched as part of the Chancellor's 'Plan for Jobs' in 2020 provided jobs of 25 hour per week of 6 months duration to 16 - 24-year-olds at risk of long-term unemployment. Jobs were provided in NYCC and placements were also brokered for Small to Medium Sized Enterprise's (SME's) across the county. NYCC partnered with over 100 NY employers to provide 540 Kickstart jobs including 61 in NYCC. At the end of September '22, 163 young people had been appointed to these roles and the scheme has now ceased. There were a number of roles unfilled due to either them being based in a remote geographic location, lack of engagement from employers or roles nationally known to be hard to fill' e.g. Care work or food production.
- 4.4 All 163 Kickstart employees have now completed/left their Kickstart jobs. Of this total number, at least 55% have either secured employment or progressed into further education.
- 4.5 Despite efforts to maintain contact with participants it has not been possible to track destinations after Kickstart for a large number and so many outcomes have been classed as 'unknown', although they may have gone on to secure further employment or education. All 163 Kickstart participants have been provided with employability support and offered additional support to help find employment.
- 4.6 Work Experience
22 requests for work experience have been met. During summer 2022, 11 'in-person' work experience placements have been hosted by a variety of services including Technology and Change, Finance and Major Projects. Feedback from young people and services has been positive.
- 4.7 Working closely with the Leaving Care service
Care Leavers are supported to secure work placements and paid employment in NYCC. There are currently 11 Care Leavers in paid employment in NYCC, 5 are completing apprenticeships with 6 in substantive roles.
- 4.8 Princes Trust
The Council has partnered with the Princes Trust to recruit 78 young people into Health and Social care. Depending on the young person's circumstances this includes work experience, placements and employment opportunities. The programme commenced in September 2022 with 20 active young people engaged, and 3 have secured employment.
- 4.9 Other initiatives
Include Traineeships, online Employability Sessions and initiatives with universities such as mentoring programmes and under-graduate/graduate internships.
- 4.10 Resourcing for Health and Adult Services and external care providers

Recruiting care workers is a national challenge with approximately 165,000 unfilled vacancies nationally and some 1,700 in North Yorkshire. In response NYCC developed the MakeCareMatter campaign (www.makecarematter.co.uk) to promote careers in care and increase recruitment marketing for the sector. Alongside this, the Recruitment Hub, launched in October 2018, provides recruitment support to the care sector and has been a strong base from which to increase recruitment support to the sector.

- 4.11 Demand for care workers has continued to increase, with demand far outstripping supply. Recruiting post pandemic, care work remains unattractive to many job seekers, this, together with the cost of living pressures, exacerbated the situation. Care sector recruitment has become increasingly competitive with the sector struggling to compete with supermarket and other employment sector pay rates and a range of incentives to attract talent.
- 4.12 To meet the internal and external care sector staff requirement, a sector wide multi-channel recruitment campaign is constantly delivered reaching approx. 18,000 weekly. The Recruitment Hub is currently, actively working with approximately 70 providers to recruit to over 120 vacancies. Since starting this campaign, 1112 care workers, have been recruited and more recently over the past 3 quarters 80 workers have been recruited for external providers with an average of 62 placements per quarter across 2021/22 & 2022/23.
- 4.13 Recruitment to other professional roles continued for the first three quarters of 2022/23 including Social workers. Recruiting so far in 22/23 an average of 22.5 vacancies per quarter with an average 17 new starters per quarter. Plus 29 international social workers have been recruited (9 arrived, 20 arriving Feb/March) and 9 Occupational Therapists.
- 4.14 Recruitment from abroad
The Council uses all available routes into social work (i.e. Step up to Social Care, Return to Social Care and more typically newly qualified routes) but despite this and following targeted recruitment campaigns multiple vacancies remain in adult social workers across the county and children’s social workers in the coastal area. As a result of the national shortage and growing demand the Council has undertaken international recruitment of 29 adult and 10 children social workers from South Africa and Zimbabwe. The scarcity is a national issue with many local authorities recruiting internationally something the NHS has relied on for many years. 10 new recruits have arrived and the remaining 29 arrive from next month into May which will reduce agency spend on social workers. Many regional local authorities have or are planning to recruit internationally.
- 4.15 The Council is also considering recruiting internationally for Education Psychologists similarly due to scarcity. Whilst international recruitment is costly the savings on agency spend will cover the international costs within 6 months.
- 4.16 Apprenticeships
The table below shows the total number of starts and completions across all areas of the levy spend.

	Corporate	Schools	Transfer
Total number of starts (Apr 17 – Dec 22)	542	179	191
Total number of completions (Apr 17 – Dec 22)	220	48	4
Q4 21/22 and Q1 - Q3 22/23 number of starts	77	24	51

4.17 Since January 2022 there has been a good mix of starts across most areas of the Council with higher numbers in Accounts (8), Care (12), CYPS worker (16), Digital (7), Improvement Practitioner (5) and Social Workers (9). In schools there continues to be a good level of starts for Teaching Assistants (5), Early Years (8) and Leadership and Management (9).

4.18 The table below shows the total number of starts across all directorates.

	CS	HAS	BES	CYPS	Ryedale *
Total number of starts (Apr 17 – Dec 22)	218	223	76	22	3
<i>* Graduate Apprentices employed by NYCC and seconded to Ryedale</i>					

4.19 Unspent Funds

Unspent funds from the levy pot continue to be returned to the Treasury. Since the introduction of the levy just over £2m has been returned to the Treasury, with approx. 90% of the money returned belonging to schools. NYCC has faced a number of challenges and structural limitations to maximising levy spend as previously reported including:

- Large number of part time workers making apprenticeships ineligible or impractical.
- Most schools are small, in rural locations with small workforces and a high percentage being part time, making an apprenticeship almost impossible due to low contracted hours or ability to cover the 20% off the job training.
- Rurality with limited public transport reducing labour market mobility for apprentices who are lower paid until qualified.
- The requirement to undertake Level 2 Maths and English functional skills for Level 2 & 3 apprenticeships has a negative impact on recruitment, retention and up skilling staff.

4.20 Levy Transfer

In order to make the best use of our levy spend, NYCC continues to transfer 25% of the total annual levy fund to other employers locally who either do not have their own levy fund or have fully spent their allocation. Since December 2019 transfers have been made to 62 different employers covering a total of 191 apprenticeships, with a spread across various sectors; 124 in the care sector, 45 in the construction industry, 1 in the digital sector, 1 in Leisure and Tourism and 1 in the voluntary sector. The remaining 31 are with Brierley Group companies, 13 with Align Property Partners, 17 with NY Highways and 1 with Veritau.

4.21 Hire a new Apprentice Incentive Scheme

This government scheme ran from July 2020 until January 2022, enabling employers to claim a financial incentive for hiring new apprentices. In total nearly £100K was claimed across NYCC and schools.

4.22 Graduates

The graduate programme continues to be successful with 29 currently in post; 19 recruited in 2022, including 5 for Ryedale District Council, and 3 to work on LGR projects. Feedback from services continues to be very positive indicating the calibre and contribution of graduates is high, and the graduates continue to express positive feedback about their experiences on the council's scheme.

5.0 Diversity and inclusion (D&I)

5.1 NYCC aims to be an inclusive and diverse employer, where employees feel valued and supported to be themselves at work. As well as being an important part of the wider commitment and approach as a council to diversity and inclusion, this provides real benefits

including a better understanding of our communities and service users, greater retention, and greater appeal as an employer, which improves recruitment.

- 5.2 Employee networks have been set up to engage with colleagues from underrepresented backgrounds: the Value in Racial Diversity Employee Network, the Disabled Employee Network (DEN), Gender Equality Staff Forum and the Pride Network. Staff networks have proven to be valuable, not only in the support and sense of community they provide but also in shedding light on staff experiences, and areas for improvements. As a result of feedback from employee networks in 22/23 a number of changes have been made including; flexible bank holidays to reflect religious diversity and reviewing and changing the attendance and increment policy to be more inclusive of disabled employees.
- 5.3 Celebrating awareness days has promoted and normalised discussions on issues relating to diversity and inclusion. Coverage has included amongst others Black History Month, Disability History Month, International Women's Day with a number of different articles published internally and in social media posts, Yammer posts, intranet articles, and senior manager blog features. Staff have engaged by providing case studies, podcasts and videos.
- 5.4 Also informed by staff engagement, is a revised approach to the training and learning approach; recognising that specialised training may be needed, and that one size does not fit all. There is a mandatory E-learning module for new staff and further specialised training available dependent on role and/or service area. Also training for managers, following feedback that managers were less confident when dealing with EDI complexities and were concerned about making mistakes regarding discrimination.
- 5.5 There is also a range of high-quality specific EDI related training available:
- Multiple online interactive learning modules eg. Autism and Mental Health
 - Range of Skills Booster Videos eg. Allyship
 - Council Members Seminars inviting guests' speakers with protected characteristics to share lived experience
 - Lunchtime Learning webinars eg. Allyship, Inclusive Language etc.
- 5.6 Feedback to date has been positive. For example feedback from the 'Allyship' webinar, 100% of attendees who submitted feedback left both learning new information and feeling confident in applying the new information in practical situations in the workplace. However, the impact of such training will take longer to become visible as this approach is based on a longer-term strategy of creating a more inclusive culture.

6.0 Engaging the Workforce

- 6.1 Focus for the past 12 months on engagement of the workforce has been on the LGR programme and delivered in two parts: with the county council's workforce, as part of business as usual, and under the LGR programme with staff across all eight councils as part of the transformation delivery.
- 6.2 Celebration Event
In December 2022, the NYCC staff Celebration Awards took place. As part of the drawing to the end of a chapter for the county council, staff took part in the celebration of recent projects which had a positive impact on NYCC and the services offered, as well as sharing a look back on previous projects and innovations that have brought change to NYCC over the years. There were 75 entries in this year's awards and approximately 300 participants in the online celebration award with Richard Flinton, CEX. The event was also recorded and shared with all staff on the council intranet.

6.3 Hybrid working

Continuing with new ways of working, hybrid working trials were undertaken during the year. A programme of engagement touch points included seeking employee feedback, manager feedback and a series of focus groups with staff using local offices. Feedback helped inform requirements across the council and getting the balance right for service delivery, optimising the range of workspaces and digital resources to achieve high performance, ensuring customer needs are met. This feedback has informed the development of a hybrid working policy with supporting resources for managers and staff.

6.3 Appraisals

Webinars have taken place to support managers and staff with their appraisal requirements when using the My View system to record Individual Performance Management (IPM) review outcomes for 2022/23.

7.0 **Learning and Development**

7.1 Strengthening the workforce by developing the requisite knowledge, skills and behaviours to meet the workforce priorities is important, and headline data for Q4 2021/22 and Q1-Q3 2022/23 is below:

- 1,047 classroom training events for 9,678 delegates (including 702 from Private, Voluntary and Independent PVI Sectors)
- 30,659 mandatory online learning completions (including 5,108 from PVI Sectors)
- 18,913 non-mandatory online learning completions (including 1,673 from the PVI)
- 3,173 CPD training/learning activities undertaken
- 39 middle managers completed cohort 12 of the Middle Management Programme in May 2022, with a further 51 starting on cohort 13 in September 2022. 11 of the 51 managers who started on the programme in September 2022 are Borough or District Council colleagues.
- 110 Borough or District Council staff attended courses between January and December 2022 which ranged from Anaphylaxis awareness through to manager development such as Having Difficult Conversations.

7.2 Online learning resources delivered via the Learning Zone, accessed by staff from any device 24/7

- Ashridge (Learning materials for managers) 4,677 views
- Learning Nexus 7,204
- Learning Zone views 1,298,870

7.3 The key training and learning priorities for 2022/23 included:

- Continued support for HAS including a new delivery model increasing accessibility to training, enhanced quality assurance and a focus on co-production.
- A joint approach to positive behaviour management training across CYPS and HAS, delivering greater consistency and a cost saving due to the development of an in-house delivery model.
- Develop better knowledge and skills around the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda by introducing mandatory classroom training for frontline staff and all managers, and mandatory online learning for the rest of the workforce, with a plan to ensure the workforce is fully trained by April 2024.

- Continue to deliver adult social care training to the wider sector via the Learning 4 Care project (funded by government IBCF funding) whilst developing a longer term working relationship with external providers post funding.
- Continue to support a high number of Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programmes for Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQS)
- Provide mentoring, observation, support groups, guidance and advice for over 100 Practice Educators in social care.
- Coaching continued to be a priority, with a higher level of staff referred for coaching to support various work-related activity than seen in previous years.
- Training and learning continued to build support NYCC companies and local schools including work with Veritau and NYHighways.
- New online learning packages created for LGR, and existing packages reviewed/rebranded ready for 1st April 2023.
- A statutory/mandatory training programme has been mapped for the new council and will be available from 1st April 2023
- A Leadership Academy has been developed and will provide a programme of support to all levels of leaders and managers, as well as those who are aspiring to become managers. To be launched in September 2023.
- Continued work on developing a managers induction programme to ensure managers in NYC have a strong knowledge and understanding of their role, accountability, and values and behaviours required.
- A mentoring programme for managers in NYC is being designed with a planned roll out prior to vesting day. This will offer support, guidance and operational assistance to initially senior managers recently appointed and will further look to strength knowledge, skill and networking across NYC.
- Knowledge transfer of leavers - a toolkit has been developed to capture corporate memory and tacit knowledge of experienced and long serving officers across the 8 councils planning on leaving over the next few months. The objective is to retain that knowledge as an asset to pass on to successors.
- Work has been underway with staff across District councils to prepare for the movement of all staff onto a single learning management system, The Learning Zone after 1st April 2023. This project will also ensure the transfer of all staff training records into one secure system for reporting and tracking purposes.

8.0 Pay and Reward

- 8.1 The Pay and Reward priority has been to respond to a difficult labour market environment, with recruitment and retention challenges, against a backdrop of late national pay negotiations.
- 8.2 Over the summer a comprehensive pay benchmarking review was undertaken in response to unusual difficulty with recruitment and retention. The pay benchmarking identified that pay rates, after the 2022-23 pay award, were largely competitive with market rates, with problems arising from a labour supply shortage (reflecting for example the 500,000 reduction in over 50s in the labour market nationally), and competition with private sector market rates (technology sectors and crafts). It was identified that turnover was highest in the shorter pay grades.
- 8.3 In response to these findings there have been some changes to the council's pay structure including merging some grades to create longer pay grades, an additional senior manager grade and some small changes to pay point values within the locally negotiated part of the

pay spine to create equal incremental steps. Entry level Grade A is being merged with Grade B because of the national NJC pay award which sees pay point 1 deleted from 1st April 2023.

- 8.4 Implementation of the national NJC pay award of £1,925 on all pay points is already having some impact, with an increase in applicants for hard to fill care roles. The employee benefit scheme remains an important part of attraction and is both popular internally and generates savings for employees and the council as an employer.

9.0 HR Shared Service Team (HRSST)

- 9.1 HRSST continued to provide HR support and advice to managers primarily across NYCC, Ryedale DC and Selby DC, with over 2300 enquiries responded to and support provided to over 280 cases to date. The team have also provided support via Ask SAL; the majority of enquiries have been with regards to TUPE and terms and conditions, in response to LGR.

- 9.2 The 3 key development priorities for the year have been:

- attendance management: with monthly calls made to managers who have members of their team absent to check on progress and offer support. Data is analysed to identify hotspots which are appropriately escalated.
- manager skills/induction: all manager skills sessions have been reviewed and are now offered in a bite-sized, interactive format. The manager induction session has been reviewed and is now co-hosted with ESS colleagues to better meet the needs of new managers.
- casework review: panel dates are booked, and panel members are identified six months in advance to make the process more efficient and to assist with reducing case timescales.

10.0 Commercial

- 10.1 Commercial activity has remained strong in the education market despite conditions being challenging in terms of growth and retention. In terms of the last financial year, financial targets set by the NYES board were met, and this year looks confident, with a combined profit exceeding £500k. Occupational Health have seen significant growth, which included taking on the contract for East Riding Council. The focus remains on high retention, with average retention rate around 97%. In terms of growth the focus is on organic growth in areas surrounding North Yorkshire. In the last 6 months new contracts worth over £500k for HR and ESS have been secured, which demonstrates a competitive and attractive offer in the market.

11.0 Local Government Reorganisation

- 11.1 An update was provided to the Transition Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9th November 2022 providing an overview of the HR Workstream, detailing the work of each of the ten subgroups and outlining in particular how staff are being informed and supported through the transition. Therefore, this information has not been included in this report as it has already been covered by Scrutiny.
- 11.2 Obviously significant work has been carried out this year to support the LGR process and has been a focus of the HR teams.
- 11.3 From a workforce perspective the full senior management structure is now in place having recruited to all Management Board and Assistant Director posts across NYC. A total of 37

positions, all but one was filled from within existing staff across all 8 councils, which demonstrates the skills, knowledge and talent available within the 8 authorities.

- 11.4 Work undertaken on LGR has been mentioned throughout the report in terms of preparation for vesting day ranging from induction and training available, health and wellbeing support to staff, to the terms and conditions and pay structures, all which are key in making the new council attractive to new applicants but also to retain staff and reward and recognise them for their excellent work.

12.0 Conclusion

- 12.1 It has been another demanding and unusual year dominated by a range of service pressures, particularly in the health and social care sector, labour market pressures causing recruitment and retention pressures and higher agency spend, Covid and other causes of sickness absence. A hybrid working model which can be adapted to individual and service needs has been implemented, and the council has continued to innovate and adapt to attract and retain in a difficult recruitment market. The focus has continued on strong communication and engagement to support the workforce to remain resilient through a continuing period of change, and to maximise retention.
- 12.2 Alongside these ongoing challenges have been high levels of activity in preparation for local government changes. Effective collaborative working across councils and with trade union colleagues has resulted in the building blocks being in place for the start of the new council. The next Overview and Scrutiny workforce update report in June will set out these preparations in more detail.

13.0 Recommendation

- 13.1 Members are asked to note and comment on the report.

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Date: 22 February 2023